



STATE OF VERMONT
Department of Education
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

VERMONT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Doubletree Hotel and Conference Center, 1117 Williston Road, South Burlington
November 18, 2008

The State Board of Education shall sustain a vision of high skills, creative thinking, and love of knowledge and learning for every student by setting education policy that ensures student achievement in a safe and healthy learning environment.

Approved Minutes – November 18, 2008

Present: Board: Tom James, Chair; Ruth Stokes, Vice-chair; Kathy Larsen; Tess Savage; Chris Robbins; Bill Corrow; Brian Vachon; Susan Schill; Alex Melville; Fayneese Miller (arrived at 10:20 a.m.)

DOE: Bill Talbott, Acting Commissioner; Mark Oettinger; Jill Remick; Bill Romond; Carol King

Others: Retta Dunlap, VBE; Daniel Michaels, ACT; Sherry Gile, VTNEA; Merryn Rutledge, consultant

Preliminaries

Item A: Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance

Tom James, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:22 a.m. He led the group in the pledge of allegiance.

Item B: Roll Call and Introductions

Board members introduced themselves, as did others in attendance.

Item C: Public to be Heard

There were no comments from the public at this time.

Item D: Announcements, Board Member Updates (Chair, Board Members)

Chair James noted that they are currently in the final stages of selecting the new commissioner. They expect to go into executive session at 10:30 a.m. to continue their discussions.

Item E: October Monthly Report

Chair James reminded those present that the monthly report has been used for the past several years and that it is another manner in which the Board communicates with everyone. It is available on the Web at: <http://education.vermont.gov/html/Board/schedule.html>. James encouraged all to look at the monthly report via the department Web site to stay informed on what is going on with the Board.

Item F: Commissioner's Update (Bill Talbott, Acting Commissioner)

Commissioner Talbott explained he has been primarily focused on the budget as part of his CFO duties. He will be attending the Secondary Transformation Conference at Lake Morey on Thursday, November 20. He will also be attending a Cabinet meeting at the Governor's office at 4:00 p.m. today.

James noted that he, Brian Vachon, Chris Robbins and Kathy Larsen also plan to attend the Secondary Transformation Conference.

Action Items

Item G: Consent Agenda

Document(s): Consent Agenda items

Motion: Chris Robbins moved, seconded by Tess Savage, to approve the consent agenda with comment. The Board received revised copies of the minutes for the November 6th special meeting.

1. **Minutes of October 21, 2008 SBE Meeting**
2. **Minutes of October 28, 2008 SBE Special Meeting**
3. **Minutes of November 6, 2008 SBE Special Meeting**
4. **Ed Flex Waiver Request: Barre Supervisory Union** (Kerry Garber, David Baroudi, Mary Mulloy)
5. **Designation of State of Vermont Public Records as the permanent repository for The Prospect Archive and Center for Education and Research** (Laura Glass)
6. **Designation of Champlain College as the permanent repository for student academic records of Woodbury College** (closed as of 9/19/08) (Laura Glass)

The motion was approved unanimously (8-0).

Discussion Items

Item H: FY 10 Budget Development: Identifying DOE Programs (Bill Talbott)

Document(s): Spreadsheet

Discussion: Bill Talbott has been working with the Finance and Management Office to develop the FY 2010 budget with a five percent reduction in addition to reductions that have occurred over the course of this year. This amounts to roughly \$670,000. He noted that there were some

general fund monies that could be funded through the education fund (i.e. driver education and pre-K program funds). He shared a handout listing programs and the associated work of the 180 people at the DOE and where the general fund dollars go, in order to demonstrate what, if anything, the DOE can stop doing. He explained that the DOE performs a lot of administrative duties and this could demonstrate where there might be possibilities for work consolidation or elimination. There are currently 177.9 FTEs plus 14.1 staff members who work for Act 117 and Tobacco funded program, for a current total of 192 positions. The DOE is currently in the process of reducing seven additional positions.

Chair James noted his point that he made to the Legislature last year that neither the Board nor the commissioner is in charge of the cost of education -- the Legislature is.

The DOE will develop a plan for making the needed reductions and bring that back to the Board.

Item J: January 2009 Legislative Agenda Considerations (Bill Talbott, Mark Oettinger)

Document(s): None

Discussion: Talbott explained that the DOE reviewed previous acts of legislation and examined the use of legislation to move the Transformation initiative forward. Mark Oettinger, General Counsel, explained to the Board what the Administration put forward, known as the child protection legislation. Several items will have implications for public education, including an expanded curriculum in health education (focusing on understanding how to protect children from sexual predators). The child protection registry and adult protection registry both are to be checked by school districts whenever they hire someone, and potentially to check existing employees. This may include volunteer coaches, drivers, chaperones, etc. The registries are through the Department for Children and Families. The DOE Educator Quality division would need to check the registries whenever administering or renewing licenses. Oettinger also discussed the relationship of the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators to these decisions and the understanding of what the legislation is expected to be. Corrow expressed concern that it would discourage volunteers because of the cost and time burden of a criminal background check. James asked for a complete legislative agenda for the December meeting.

Item I: Annual Construction Aid Budget Request and Prioritized School Construction List (Cathy Hilgendorf)

Document(s): Discuss Topic Cover and accompanying spreadsheets

Discussion: Cathy Hilgendorf spoke to the Board regarding facilities and school construction. Annually, the Board is required to vote on a prioritized list of school construction projects that are eligible for school construction aid for presentation to the Legislature in January. For the last two years there has been a school construction suspension for new approvals. This was for all projects that had not been passed by public vote with the following two exceptions: emergencies and consolidations. There were some factors that made the amount that was being funded increase significantly, including funding technical center construction at 100 percent, plus funding 90 percent of wood chip heating plant construction. The \$20 million backlog was put in place by the Legislature. Last year, \$10 million was put towards this by the Appropriations Committee. 42.4 million dollars would completely cover the obligations that are currently owed to the school districts. Currently, districts borrow in anticipation of the aid and are therefore paying interest on these loans. The moratorium is indefinite – until the state comes up with a

system to pay it off. Schill noted an issue regarding the Newport Town School, which Hilgendorf explained.

It is anticipated that the Board will vote to approve the item at its December 16th meeting.

Transformation of Education

Item K: Education Transformation Policy Commission (Bill Romond)

Document(s): Green Sheet

Discussion: Bill Romond, Deputy Commissioner for Transformation noted that one of the goals of the November 20 Lake Morey Secondary School Transformation session was to bring examples of transformational practices to schools and staff as well as elicit information from participants where Vermont's transformation can go. He shared information on the goals and the speakers expected at the gathering, noting that currently over 300 participants have registered.

Romond also reported on the Council of Chief State School Officers policymaking conference he attended this past week on behalf of Bill Talbott. Much of the focus of the conference linked closely with transformation.

He also outlined the scope and work of the Transformation Policy Commission which will be lead by Kay Charron. Board members questioned the resources needed for this commission, and some Board members wanted a sunset built into the plan.

Motion: Susan Schill moved, seconded by Brian Vachon, to accept the policy commission plan with a sunset of December 31, 2009. The motion passed 9-0.

Item L: Future Agendas (Bill Talbott, Bill Romond, Carol King)

This item was held for future discussion.

Executive Session

Motion: At 10:48 a.m., Chris Robbins moved, Susan Schill seconded, to go into executive session, including Merryn Rutledge, to continue discussions on the selection of a commissioner of education. The motion passed 9-0.

The Board came out of executive session at 1:40 p.m. No action was taken.

Motion: At 1:45 p.m., Chris Robbins moved, Susan Schill seconded to adjourn the November 18, 2008 meeting of the State Board of Education.

Minutes recorded by Jill Remick
Minutes prepared by Carol King